THE CHILLING ARCHIVES OF HORROR COMICS!™

HAUNTED HORROR™

#17

Mr. KARSWELL

MR. KARSWELL

TRAUMA-TIME ONCE AGAIN WITH ANOTHER JOLTING, BI-MONTHLY JAUNT DOWN TERROR LANE!
YOU PARAMOURS OF PRE-CODE POTBOILERS HAVE DEVELOPED QUITE A TROUBLING TASTE FOR THE MORBID AND MACABRE. WE ARE, OF COURSE, MORE THAN PLEASED TO CRACK OPEN OUR CRUMBLING CRYPT OF HIDEOUS, HORRID HITS TO ALLOW THE DEMONS, GHOSTS, MUMMIES, AND MURDER TO SPEW FORTH!
YES, KIDDIES, WE HAVE YOU NOW RIGHT WHERE WE WANT YOU AND THE ONLY WAY OUT IS...
ESCAPE TO DEATH!

Art by
Art Fuentes

ARTEFFO
9/12

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ESCAPE TO DEATH!

YOU'RE GETTING USED TO THE STENCH OF DEATH, THE SICKLY-SWEET ODOR OF FORMALDAHYDE! YOUR JOB IN THE PRISON MORGUE IS A SNAP! BUT A TEN YEAR STRETCH... WITH EIGHT MORE YEARS TO GO, IS A LONG TIME! IT'S THINKING OF HONEY CARROLL, THAT MAKES YOU WANT TO BREAK OUT! YOU MAKE IT ALL RIGHT... BUT LITTLE DO YOU DREAM INTO WHAT ABYSS OF HORROR YOU ESCAPE...

NO ONE EVER THOUGHT OF THIS GETTAWAY BEFORE, GIMPY! HA! HA! IT'S A GOOD ONE IF I MUST SAY SO! BUT YOU POOR DUMBY, YOU CAN'T HEAR ME!

MIKE MORAN

MIKE RONSKY

Jon D'Agostino

WHERE DO WE PUT THE BODY, TAD?

DUMP IT HERE, BOYS!

PRISON MORGUE

YOU WORK IN THE PRISON MORGUE! LIKE A SINGED CHICKEN, THE BODY OF AN EXECUTED CON IS BROUGHT INTO THE PRISON MORGUE SO YOU CAN STUFF IT INTO A COFFIN! GIMPY, THE TOWN UNDER-TAKER, A DEAF MUTE, HANGS ON YOUR TAIL LIKE A DEVOTED DOG...

BAD BREAK, TAD, TO GET STUCK IN THE MORGUE JOB!

NAILIN' UP COFFINS AIN'T SUCH A STIFF JOB!

Dark Mysteries #14, October 1953. Art: Jon D'Agostino. Publisher: Master Comics.

YOU GOT OFF EASY ON THAT MURDER RAP AND THIS DUMMY, GIMPY, THE UNDERTAKER, SERVES YOU LIKE A SLAVE...

READ MY LIPS, EH GIMPY? IT WAS A GOOD ONE ABOUT THE "STIFF" JOB, EH? HA!

IT WAS YOU CAUSED GIMPY'S DEAF-NESS THAT TIME WHEN LEFTY WAS SHOT AND YOU NEEDED A GRAVE! BUT IT WASN'T READY...

I TOLD YOU WE HAD TO BURY LEFTY TONIGHT!

I CAN'T GET THAT GRAVE 'TILL TOMORROW! MEAN-WHILE I'LL COVER HIM HERE!

NEXT TIME YOU DO WHAT I SAY!

OOHHH!

AFTER THAT, GIMPY WAS STONE DEAF! BUT YOU HAD THE GOODS ON HIM AND YOU KEPT HIM WELL HEELED...

AT NIGHT, IN YOUR CELL, YOU GET RESTLESS, THINKING OF HONEY, IT WAS FOR HER YOU DID WHAT YOU DID! MAYBE...MAYBE ANOTHER GUY'S COME ALONG?

SHE PROMISED TO WAIT... BUT IF SHE TWO-TIMES ME... I'LL BREAK OUTTA THIS CAN...

VISITING DAY. YOU ARE ALL TENSED UP. YOU KEEP THINKING... WILL HONEY SHOW UP...

I'LL SEE HER IN ANOTHER HOUR! SHE'D BETTER SHOW UP!

THE TIME ARRIVES AND YOU'RE CALLED TO THE VISITING ROOM! YOU SPY HER GORGEOUS HONEY COLORED HAIR...

GREAT KID, THAT HONEY! SHE WOULDN'T DISAPPOINT HER TAD!

EVEN THOUGH THE GUARDS LISTEN IN, YOU LIVE FOR THIS WEEKLY VISIT! HER WORDS REASSURE YOU...

SURE, TAD, I'LL WAIT FOR YOU! EIGHT YEARS AREN'T SO LONG!

THERE AIN'T ANY GUYS HANGING AROUND YOU, ARE THERE, HONEY?

IT MAKES YOU FEEL NICE TO HEAR HER SAY YOU'RE THE ONLY ONE AND SHE'LL WAIT FOR YOU TO GET OUT! BUT EIGHT YEARS? CAN SHE WAIT?

WHERE DID YOU GET SUCH CRAZY IDEAS, TAD? DARLING, LISTEN, I NEED MORE MONEY!

IF YOU EVER TWO-TIME ME, HONEY, I'LL GET YOU...

YOU WONDER WHY SHE NEEDS ALL THE MONEY SHE ASKS YOU FOR EVERY WEEK! STILL, IT GIVES YOU A HOLD ON HER...

VISITING OVER!

GO TO MY MA'S PLACE IN JERSEY! TELL HER TO CUT THE ROOTS UNDER THE LILAC BUSH...

THE MONEY'S ALWAYS IN SUCH OUT-OF-THE-WAY PLACES!

YOU SURE PLAYED IT SMART! CACHED YOUR DOUGH IN SCATTERED PLACES SO HONEY HAD TO COME BACK TO YOU EVERY WEEK FOR MORE...

SEE YOU NEXT WEEK, TAD DARLING!

I'LL BE WAITING, HONEY!

YOU FEEL BETTER AFTER SEEING HONEY! SHE SURE NEEDS PLENTY OF DOUGH! LUCKY YOU PULLED THAT BANK JOB AND GOT A BIG PILE CACHED AWAY! WITH ALL THAT DOUGH WAITING, SHE'LL PLAY IT STRAIGHT WITH YOU! THERE GOES THE BELL FOR SOCIAL HALL AND TV...

BETCHA ROCKY KNOCKS OUT SLIM!

MY DOUGH'S ON SLIM...FOR THE FIFTH ROUND!

GONG!

ALL THE BOYS LOOK FORWARD TO THE FIGHTS ON TV, REAL EXCITING! BUT... THAT GIRL ON THE SCREEN, IN THE FIRST ROW! IT... LOOKS... LIKE...

ONE TO THE JAW, SLIM!

HEY, ROCKY! MY DOUGH'S ON YA!

A CLOSE-UP FLASHES ON THE SCREEN! YEA, IT *IS* HONEY, PRETTY CHUMMY WITH DUKE CORY, YOUR ENEMY! YOU WANT TO YELL OUT, BUT YOU CAN'T...

THAT DIRTY TWO TIMING TRAMP!

BACK IN YOUR CELL, YOU PACE THE FLOOR LIKE A CAGED ANIMAL! YOUR GIRL WAS DRESSED TO KILL... WITH YOUR DOUGH... AND WITH DUKE CORY!

NOW I GOTTA BUST OUTTA HERE! BUT HOW? HOW?

NEXT DAY AT WORK IN THE MORGUE, YOU'RE STILL MAD! YOU MUST BREAK OUT. BUT HOW? THEN...

THEY FRY ON THURSDAY! REMEMBER, MORAN'S BODY GOES TO THE CREMATORIUM AND RONSKY'S BODY GOES TO OHIO BY FREIGHT!

OKAY!

THE PLAN TO ESCAPE COMES TO YOU! YOU'LL GET INTO THE COFFIN WITH RONSKY AND GET OUT WHILE EN ROUTE TO OHIO! YOU'LL NEED GIMPY'S HELP... WHEN VISITING DAY ARRIVES...

TELL GIMPY TO COME HERE TOMORROW, HONEY!

SURE TAD! WHAT DO YOU WANT WITH THAT DEAF MUTE?

NEVER MIND, JUST SEE THAT GIMPY GETS HERE!

SO LONG, TAD DARLING! I'LL MISS YOU! THANKS FOR THE MONEY!

SEE YOU SOON, HONEY! VERY SOON!

SO NOW YOU WAIT FOR GIMPY TO COME! THE HOURS DRAG...

WHY DOESN'T THAT GIMPY GET HERE?

AT LAST! THE GUARD CALLS YOU TO THE VISITOR'S ROOM! IT'S NOT VISITOR'S DAY, SO IT MUST BE GIMPY...

A SPECIAL VISITOR FOR YOU, TAD!

OKAY, BURNS!

THE GUARD LISTENS, BUT HE DOESN'T HEAR A WORD OF YOUR CONVERSATION! THE DEAF MUTE, GIMPY, EASILY READS YOUR LIPS! YOU TELL HIM WHEN MORAN AND RONSKY ARE EXECUTED, HE MUST BRING A FALSE BOTTOM COFFIN TO THE MORGUE FOR RONSKY'S BODY AND YOU WILL GET INTO THE FALSE BOTTOM AND HE MUST OPEN IT AT THE FREIGHT STATION TO LET YOU OUT...

NEXT DAY...

YEP! MORAN AND RONSKY BURN TOMORROW!

I'LL HAVE THE COFFINS READY!

PROMPTLY AT DAWN, MORAN IS FIRST TO BURN IN THE ELECTRIC CHAIR! YOU KNOW WHEN IT HAPPENS BY THE FLICKERING LIGHTS IN YOUR CELL... TEN MINUTES LATER, RONSKY MEETS HIS DOOM...

ARGHHH!

OFF

ON

MAY THEIR SOULS REST IN PEACE, AMEN!

SOON, THEY'LL BRING THE TWO STIFFS HERE TO YOU IN THE MORGUE! BUT YOU'RE GETTING NERVOUS! GIMPY HASN'T BROUGHT THE COFFINS! ONE WITH A FALSE BOTTOM...

MAYBE HE DIDN'T READ MY LIPS RIGHT?

I'M SWEATING ALL OVER! WHY DOESN'T HE COME?

AT LAST GIMPY ARRIVES, HE FLASHES YOU A WINK! WHEW, THAT WAS A TENSE MOMENT...

DID YOU PUT TAGS ON THE COFFINS, BOYS?

YEA, MORAN AND RONSKY! STUFF THEM IN WHEN THEY'RE BROUGHT HERE, TAD! I'LL TAKE GIMPY UP FOR A PASS!

THE BODIES OF MORAN AND RONSKY ARE CARRIED IN AND YOU STUFF RONSKY'S INTO THE COFFIN WITH THE FALSE BOTTOM AND MORAN'S INTO THE OTHER COFFIN...

MY PLAN IS WORKING PERFECTLY!

SPIKE RONSKY

MIKE

THE GUARDS HAVE LEFT AND YOU HASTILY GET INTO RONSKY'S COFFIN, THE ONE WITH THE FALSE BOTTOM...

NOW, TO GET INTO THE FALSE BOTTOM!

SPIKE RONSKY

YOU ARE SAFE INSIDE THE FALSE BOTTOM! YOUR HEART POUNDS AS YOU HEAR FEET ENTER THE MORGUE ROOM...

OKAY, GIMPY, TAD MUST HAVE GONE BACK TO HIS CELL! LET'S GET THESE COFFINS READY!

YOU HEAR THE HAMMERING AS GIMPY NAILS YOU IN! YOU FEEL THE BUMP AS TWO GUARDS LIFT UP YOUR COFFIN...

I'M ON MY WAY OUT!

YOU FEEL A GHOSTLY HAND... MORAN? MAYBE HE DIDN'T WANT TO BURN AGAIN, HE REMOVED THE NAME TAGS...

YOU FEEL YOURSELF SLIDE FORWARD AS THE GUARDS STOP! WHAT'S HAPPENED?

JOE, THE NAME TAGS FELL OFF! WE'LL HAVE TO PUT THEM BACK ON!

OKAY, GUS!

YOU LIE IN THE COFFIN, HORROR FILLING YOUR ENTIRE BEING AS YOU HEAR THE GUARD SAY...

Y'KNOW, JOE, I THINK I SWITCHED TAGS! I'LL TELL GIMPY!

THE GUARD CALLS TO GIMPY AS HE PULLED AWAY, BUT GIMPY IS A DEAF-MUTE, HE CAN'T HEAR...

HEY, GIMPY! I SWITCHED THE TAGS! FIX THEM!

GIMPY'S FUNERAL

ON THE WAY TO THE CREMATORIUM, YOU YELL, YOU KICK AND BANG, BUT GIMPY DOES NOT HEAR YOU...

LET ME OUT! GIMPY! HELP!

BANG! BANG!

THE TRUCK STOPS! GIMPY IS PULLING OUT YOUR COFFIN! HE'S GOING TO BURN YOU! YOU SCREAM LOUDER AND LOUDER... BUT HE CAN'T HEAR, REMEMBER?

GIMPY! IT'S ME! HELP!!

YOU FEEL THE COFFIN BEING DRAGGED ALONG THE GROUND... YOU'RE KICKING AND BANGING...

HE CAN'T HEAR ME! HELP! GIMPY! HELP!

BANG! BANG! BANG!

MIKE MORAN

SUDDENLY, SMOKE AND TERRIFIC HEAT FILLS THE NARROW BOX AS GIMPY PUSHES THE COFFIN INTO THE CREMATORIUM OVEN...

SMOKE! I'LL BURN! GIMPY! STOP!

HELPLESS, STRANGLING, YOU FEEL THE INTENSE HEAT AS THE FLAMES BEGIN TO LICK THROUGH THE WOODEN COFFIN...

ARGHH! GIMPY! HELP! ARGHHH!

MIKE MORAN

AT THE STATION, GIMPY OPENS THE OTHER COFFIN AND FINDS IT CONTAINS...

MORAN! IT'S MORAN! TAD'S NOT HERE! OH, NO! TAD WAS IN THE OTHER COFFIN!

YOU CAN IMAGINE GIMPY'S ASTONISHMENT WHEN HE FOUND HE HAS THROWN TAD INTO THE FURNACE... HEH HEH HEH!

THE END

The TERROR of AKBAR

THE EYES WERE FULL OF HATE, LUST, GREED! THOUGH NOT ATTACHED TO A BODY, THEY MOVED, FOLLOWED HER, GLOWING LIKE DISEMBODIED CAT'S EYES IN THE DARKNESS. THEY WERE OLD, THE EYES, AND THEY HAD SEEN ALL — ALL THE SIN IN THE WORLD! THEY KNEW! AND IN THE HORROR THAT FOLLOWED, IN THE FOUL CRY OF THE NETHER REGIONS, THEY WATCHED — WATCHED FOR THEIR CHANCE! FOR THEY WERE THE **EYES** — **THE EYES OF AKBAR...**

PROFESSOR ADKINS, OF THE SMITHSON MUSEUM, GETS A LONG AWAITED PACKAGE...

HA, AT LAST! MUST BE THE PACKAGE FROM JONES IN CAIRO! THE GREATEST— (CHUCKLE)— FIND IN YEARS!

UGH! I REMEMBER YOU TELLING ME ABOUT IT, PROFESSOR! I WISH I COULD SHARE YOUR ENTHUSIASM!

HAH-HAH! YOU MUSTN'T BE SO SQUEAMISH, SANDRA! AS SECRETARY TO AN ANTHROPOLOGIST YOU MUST GET USED TO THESE THINGS!

I'LL *NEVER* GET USED TO IT! HORRIBLE, MOULDY OLD THINGS!

Strange Fantasy #10, February – March 1954. Art: Iger Shop. Publisher: Farrell.

DEPENDS ON YOUR VIEWPOINT, MY DEAR! TO ME, THOSE EYES ARE A THING OF BEAUTY!

THEY'RE HORRIBLE! AND I DON'T BELIEVE A WORD OF THAT CRAZY OLD LEGEND!

TOO BAD, BECAUSE IT'S TRUE! THOSE EYES ARE FIVE THOUSAND YEARS OLD! THEY HAVE SEEN STRANGE SIGHTS, SEEN HISTORY MADE!

T—THERE IS A FASCINATION ABOUT THEM! SOMEHOW I WANT TO TOUCH THEM!

THAT'S RIGHT, MY DEAR! HOLD THEM! DON'T BE AFRAID! THEY CAN'T HURT YOU!

THEY FEEL SO FUNNY! WARM AND — SLIMY!

SUDDENLY...

EEEEEEE— THEY MOVED!

SANDRA, BE CAREFUL! IF ANYTHING HAPPENS TO THOSE EYES NOW...

I'LL JUST PUT THEM IN HERE! THOSE EYES ARE WORTH A MILLION! TOMORROW WE'LL TELL THE NEWS-PAPERS THAT WE HAVE FOUND THE EYES OF AKBAR AT LAST!

ALL RIGHT! I'LL WAIT HERE, PROFESSOR! BOB IS GOING TO PICK ME UP! WE'RE GOING TO LUIGI'S FOR DINNER!

AND LATER...

THE STORY THE PROFESSOR TOLD... SUCH RUBBISH! HOW COULD THE EYES OF A PRIEST, DEAD OVER FIVE THOUSAND YEARS, STAY ALIVE? B-BUT IT DID FEEL LIKE THEY MOVED!

A FEW MINUTES LATER, IN THE DARK MUMMY ROOM OF THE MUSEUM...

I—AKBAR—WANT MY EYES! I KNOW THEY ARE SOMEWHERE CLOSE!

AT LAST! I'LL HAVE MY EYES AGAIN! THE EYES THAT HAVE SEEN SO MUCH—THE EYES THAT KNOW EVERYTHING...

HAAAA—I'M OUT—FREE! AND MY EYES—NOW TO GET MY EYES!

THE DEAD THING, ATTRACTED BY THE LIGHT, STOMPS DOWN THE LONG CORRIDOR, SEEKING—SEEKING...

THEY CANNOT FOOL ME! I TOLD THEM THAT SOMEDAY I WOULD GET MY EYES BACK! HA-HA-HA-HA-HA—NOW...

WHILE IN THE LONELY OFFICE, SANDRA ADAMS SENSES SOMETHING WRONG...

UGH—THIS HORRIBLE MUSEUM GETS ON MY NERVES AT NIGHT!

AND THEN...

I AM AKBAR! I WANT MY EYES!

HUH! OH—

EEEEEEEE-

THE TERRIFIED GIRL DASHES PAST THE STUMBLING, BLIND HORROR...

FOOL! I CARE NOTHING FOR YOU! I ONLY WANT MY EYES! WHERE ARE THE EYES OF AKBAR?

EEEEEEEE-HELP! GUARD! HELP!

MEANTIME, BOB MORRIS, SANDRA'S BOY FRIEND, HAS JUST ENTERED THE MUSEUM...

EVENING, MR. MORRIS! I THINK YOUR GIRL IS WAITING IN THE PROFESSOR'S OFFICE!

THANKS, TOM! *HEY*—DID YOU HEAR SOMETHING? A WOMAN SCREAMING?

C'MON! THAT'S YOUR GIRL!

GREAT SCOTT! SANDRA! DARLING! WE'RE COMING, SANDRA!

A MOMENT LATER...

OHHH—BOB! IN T-THERE! THE MUMMY—H-HORRIBLE!

DARLING, ARE YOU ALL RIGHT?

HUH—DID YOU SAY MUMMY, MISS ADAMS?

THEY ARM THEMSELVES WITH THE FIRST THING AT HAND, AND...

FUNNY! I DON'T SEE OR HEAR ANYTHING!

I TELL YOU I SAW IT! IT WAS AFTER THE EYES!

IF SHE SAID THERE WAS A MUMMY IN HERE — THERE WAS!

BUT... THERE WAS SOMETHING HERE! *WOW*—LOOKIT THAT SAFE! RIPPED OPEN LIKE IT WAS MADE OF PAPER!

NOTHING HUMAN COULD HAVE DONE THAT!

UGH—IT WASN'T HUMAN! A MUMMY—A CORPSE THOUSANDS OF YEARS OLD!

THE EYES! THEY'RE GONE! SO IT REALLY D-DID WANT THE EYES!

EYES? AKBAR? MAYBE YOU BETTER TELL ME ABOUT IT, HONEY.

YEAH! AND MAYBE I BETTER PHONE THE COPS! THEY MIGHT BE INTERESTED!

BUT EVEN THEN...

AAAAA— AKBAR CAN SEE! AT LAST HE HAS HIS EYES! THE ANCIENT PROPHECY HAS BEEN FULFILLED!

EEEEEEEE—

OUT OF AKBAR'S WAY, FOOLS! I WILL KILL ANY WHO INTERFERE! STAND ASIDE!

A STARTLED POLICEMAN SUMMONS HELP...

TWEEEEETTTE—

TWEEEEEETTTEEE—

HO, A TOMB OF SOME SORT! THE FOOLS WILL NEVER FIND AKBAR IN THE DARKNESS OF A TOMB! I—(CHUCKLE)—KNOW MUCH OF TOMBS!

WHAT IS IT?

DUNNO, BUT IT'S DANGEROUS! DON'T TAKE ANY CHANCES!

8TH AVE. SUBWAY

HEY, YOU— YOWWWW—

I AM AKBAR, FOOL! GUARD YOUR TOMB ENTRANCE, BUT DO NOT TRY TO STOP ME! I AM A HIGH PRIEST!

SUDDENLY THE GROTESQUE THING SLIPS AND FALLS...

EEEEYAAA— I FALL! MY EYES— GONE AGAIN! MY EYES!

MY EYES! WHERE ARE THEY? I MUST HAVE MY EYES! HELP—HELP—SOMEONE HELP ME FIND MY EYES! YAAAAA—AGAIN I AM BLIND!

MEN

AS THE BLINDED MUMMY EDGES TOWARD THE BRINK OF THE PLATFORM...

FOOLS! WHERE ARE ALL THE PRIESTS OF THIS TOMB? IS THERE NOBODY TO HELP AKBAR, WHO HAS HELPED SO MANY IN HIS TIME! I DEMAND MY **EYES!**

HUHH — YIIIIIIIIII — AKBAR FALLS!

OOOWWWWWWW — AKBAR DIES!

A LITTLE LATER...

OHH — HORRIBLE! THAT T-THING AND ITS GREEN EYES! WHEN I THINK THAT IT WAS RIGHT THERE IN THE OFFICE WITH ME...

FORGET IT, HONEY! IT'S ALL OVER NOW! BUT I WONDER WHERE THE EYES ARE? THE PROFESSOR ISN'T GOING TO BE HAPPY ABOUT THIS!

MUCH LATER...

SORRY, BUT THERE'S NO SIGN OF THE EYES! WE'VE LOOKED EVERYWHERE, UP AND DOWN THE PLATFORM AND THE TRACKS! NOT MUCH LEFT OF THAT *THING*, EITHER!

GUESS WE'D BETTER GET BACK TO THE MUSEUM AND GIVE THE PROFESSOR THE BAD NEWS!

YES, THE EYES OF AKBAR ARE LOST AGAIN!

LOST? NO! SOMEWHERE THE EYES ARE ALIVE, WAITING, SEEING KNOWING! —

...AND SOMEDAY A **MUMMY**, SEWN TOGETHER, A THING OF DRY, LEATHERY FLESH AND BRITTLE, YELLOW BONES, WITH RAW, GAPING HOLES IN A CRUSHED SKULL, WILL AGAIN GO LOOKING FOR **THE EYES OF AKBAR...**

The End

DOES YOUR TELEVISION SET HAVE ***GHOSTS?*** ARE YOUR ***CHANNELS*** HAUNTED? WELL, HERE'S A LITTLE ***PROGRAM*** I'M SURE YOU'LL ENJOY. LET'S ***TUNE*** IN ON HENRY AND GRACE MEEKS TO GET THE WHOLE PICTURE, AND I'LL TELL YOU THE STORY OF THE...

TELEVISION GHOST..

HENRY MEEKS! STOP THAT THIS INSTANT! HOW MANY TIMES HAVE YOU BEEN TOLD NOT TO DISTURB ME WHEN I'M WATCHING TELEVISION!

THIS IS AN AVERAGE DAY IN THE LIVES OF HENRY AND GRACE MEEKS...

... SHALL WE LOOK IN ON THEM? H-M-M?

5:30 P.M.

HOW MANY TIMES DO I HAVE TO TELL YOU TO COME HOME EARLY ON TUESDAYS? IF YOU THINK I'M GOIN' TO MISS TONIGHT'S PROGRAMS, YOU'RE CRAZY! NOW GET INSIDE BEFORE I FORGET I'M A LADY!

705 EAST

APARTMENT FOR RENT 4-5 ROOM

YES, M'DEAR!

EATS

702

6:15 P.M.

GRACE, LOVE, YOU KNOW I CAN'T EAT CABBAGE BECAUSE IT MAKES...

SNIFF

SNIFF

SNIFF SNIFF

SNIFF

SHUT UP! WHO ARE YOU TO TELL ME ANYTHING? YOU'LL EAT WHAT I GIVE YOU OR STARVE! WHA'D'YA THINK I'M RUNNING HERE, A DELICATESSEN?

Mister Mystery #1, September 1951. Art attributed to Charles Stern. Publisher: Stanley Morse.

7:00 P.M.

FAT SLOB! ALWAYS STEPPING ALL OVER ME! WHY DO I LET HER DO IT? CAUSE I'M AFRAID OF HER, THAT'S WHY! O-O-OH, ONE OF THESE DAYS I'M GOING TO JUST... !

8:00 P.M.

TURN OFF THAT LIGHT, ***STUPID!*** IF YOU WANT TO READ, GO DOWN TO THE CELLAR WITH THE REST OF THE MICE!

YES, LOVE!

10:30 P.M.

OH! THERE GOES THE PICTURE! GO UP ON THE ROOF AND TWIST THE AERIAL... AND BE QUICK ABOUT IT!

DO THIS, DO THAT! IF ONLY I WERE MAN ENOUGH TO...

MUMBLE

GRUMBLE MUMBLE

I'VE GOT TO DRAW THE LINE SOMEWHERE...THIS IS GETTING TO BE TOO MUCH!

WHAT WERE YOU DOING UP THERE, SWINGING ON THE AERIAL? YOU RUINED THE WHOLE PROGRAM! NOW GO TO BED SO I CAN WATCH THE REST WITHOUT ANY INTERRUPTIONS!

NO, DEAR, ER, I MEAN YES, DEAR... BUT I'M NOT SLEEPY!

WHUP! THAT DOES IT! THAT'S THE LAST STRAW!

TWANG

1:00 A.M.

THIS IS ABSOLUTELY THE END! THAT FAT SLOB WILL HAVE TO BE DISPOSED OF... AND THE SOONER THE BETTER!

HENRY, KNOWING THAT GRACE HAD A BRIDGE PARTY CAME HOME EARLY THE NEXT DAY PREPARED TO DO THE JOB THAT NIGHT...

IF THAT DUMB-OX ONLY KNEW WHAT I HAVE IN STORE FOR HER TONIGHT, SHE'D CHANGE HER MIND ABOUT MY BEING A MOUSE... NOW TO THE CELLAR!

LA DE DA DE DA! NOW LET'S SEE, THIS LOOKS LIKE A GOOD SPOT!

♪♪ DUM DE DUM! OH I'VE GOT TO DIG MUCH DEEPER THAN THIS! ♪ ♪♪

♪ HUMM-M-M-M-M-M-M-M-M-M-! ♪ ♪

HA! HA!

KA-POW

HA HA HA HA HA HA HA HA HA HA HA HA HA HA

♪ LUM DE DUM ♪ DE DUM! ♪

WELL WHAT DO YOU THINK OF THAT? I DIDN'T THINK SHE HAD BRAINS ENOUGH TO OUTSMART ME. OH, WELL! GUESS I'LL HAVE TO MAKE THE BEST OF IT!

FOR THE NEXT FEW DAYS POOR HENRY WAS AT A LOSS... HE JUST DIDN'T KNOW WHAT TO DO WITH HIMSELF. FINALLY, REALIZING THAT HE WAS A ***GHOST.*** HE DECIDED TO PUT HIS POWER TO USE AND WENT ABOUT THE BUSINESS OF ***HAUNTING*** GRACE!

AND SO...

OH! NO!

THIS IS BETTER THAN LIVING!

AND THEN...

YOW

I HAVEN'T HAD SO MUCH FUN IN 30 YEARS

FINALLY ONE DAY...

I'M NOT REALLY HAUNTING HER. NOW WHAT CAN I DO THAT WILL REALLY BOTHER HER! HMMM?

WHAT'S WRONG ***NOW?*** PART OF THE SCREEN IS BLURRED!

WHAT THE...? ***THAT'S IT!*** MY BODY MAKES THE SCREEN APPEAR ***BLURRED!*** FROM NOW ON HER LIFE WILL BE ***MISERABLE!***

THIS DARN SET NEVER WORKS RIGHT. IF *HENRY* WAS HERE I COULD GET HIM TO GO UP ON THE ROOF TO FIX THE AERIAL BUT NOW I'LL HAVE TO DO IT *MYSELF!*

THIS IS THE LIFE! NOW SHE'S *REALLY* GOING TO SEE *GHOSTS* ON HER SET!

BUT THE ULTRA-HIGH FREQUENCY TELEVISION TRANSMISSION WAVES GOING THROUGH THE AERIAL CAUSED HENRY'S GHOST TO BECOME VISIBLE AND...

HENRY, NO! IT CAN'T BE YOU! I *KILLED* YOU MYSELF!

YES, DEAR, IT'S ME! *WATCH OUT* FOR THE EDGE!

EEEYOWW!

OH DEAR, OH DEAR!

TCH-TCH TCH!

AND THAT'S THE STORY OF HENRY AND GRACE MEEKS. ONLY THAT'S NOT THE END OF MY TALE. HENRY DIDN'T GET OFF THAT EASILY. YOU OUGHT TO KNOW GRACE BETTER...

WELL DON'T SIT THERE YOU BIG BOOB! GO UP TO THE SEVENTH LEVEL AND FIX THE AERIAL!

YES, DEAR! RIGHT AWAY, DEAR!

THE GLISTENING DEATH
I'M GOING TO KILL YOU, UNCLE! I'M GOING TO CHOKE THE BREATH OUT OF YOUR LYING THROAT!
N-NO, I SPEAK THE TRUTH! LOOK THERE, BEHIND YOU! DON'T YOU SEE IT? Y-A-A-A-A-H! IT'S THE GLISTENING DEATH!
NODEL and ALASCIA
IT ALL BEGAN WHEN WARREN ARNO DECIDED TO PAY A VISIT TO HIS ECCENTRIC OLD UNCLE, RECLUSE ROBERT ARNO WHO HAD LIVED IN THE LOUISANA SWAMPS FOR YEARS...
WHAT A WEIRD, SMELLY PLACE! PHEW! BUT IT'S THE PERFECT HIDEOUT FOR ME UNTIL THE HEAT IS OFF IN THE BIG CITY. THE COPS'LL NEVER FIND ME HERE!
KNOCK! KNOCK!
YES? WHAT IS IT YOU WISH?
I'M WARREN ARNO, ROBERT ARNO'S NEPHEW. LET ME IN!
INTO THE SWAMPLANDS, WHERE MANY HAD GONE BUT NONE HAD RETURNED, WENT WARREN ARNO! HIS ECCENTRIC UNCLE HAD HOARDED AWAY A FORTUNE IN GOLD... AND A MYSTERIOUSLY BEAUTIFUL GIRL BECKONED HIM WITH HER UNEARTHLY EYES! BUT WAITING PATIENTLY IN THE MURKY DEPTHS OF THE EERIE MARSHLAND WAS A CREATURE WHO LURKED IN SEARCH OF HUMAN PREY FOOLISH ENOUGH TO WANDER INTO THE HUNTING GROUNDS OF... THE GLISTENING DEATH!
1

City of The Living Dead! 1952. Art: Norman Nodel and Vince Alascia. Publisher: Avon

WARREN! WHAT ARE YOU DOING HERE? I THOUGHT YOU HAD A BUSINESS IN THE CITY!

I DID, UNCLE! BUT THINGS GOTA LITTLE TOO--UH--SLOW! AREN'T YOU GOING TO WELCOME ME?

YES---OF COURSE...HUGO! SHOW MY NEPHEW TO THE GUEST ROOM! HE PROBABLY NEEDS TO REST! THE TRIP THROUGH THE SWAMPS IS QUITE STRENUOUS!

ALL RIGHT, MR ARNO! FOLLOW ME..... DINNER IS AT SEVEN!

THE YOUNG MAN PACED UP AND DOWN IN HIS ROOM, THINKING OUT HIS NEXT MOVE...

THE OLD BOY WASN'T EXACTLY TICKLED TO SEE ME! I HEARD HE WAS A CHARACTER--BUT THERE'S SOMETHING ELSE BEHIND HIS JUMPINESS....

SO AT DINNER WARREN ARNO PLAYED HIS CARDS WITH SLICK PERFECTION...

TELL ME, UNCLE! HOW CAN YOU STAND TO LIVE HERE IN THIS PLACE? YOU HAVE NO ELECTRICITY, NO MODERN CONVENIENCES...

I LIKE QUIET, WARREN! AND I AM COMPLETELY CONTENT HERE!

BUT YOU SHOULDN'T HAVE COME! THE SWAMP IS NO PLACE FOR OUTSIDERS! THERE ARE DANGERS HERE THAT ORDINARY PEOPLE CANNOT UNDERSTAND! YOU MUST LEAVE IMMEDIATELY!

YOU MUST BE JOKING, UNCLE! I PLAN TO STAY HERE FOR SOME TIME! BUT WHAT ARE THESE--DANGERS?

I--I CANNOT SAY! BUT IF YOU VALUE YOUR LIFE AND YOUR SANITY, YOU'LL LISTEN TO ME!

LOOK OUT THERE! *UNKNOWN TERROR* LURKS OUT THERE! TAKE MY ADVICE! LEAVE WHILE YOU CAN!

PERHAPS I WILL, UNCLE--IN THE MORNING....

THAT'S WHAT YOU THINK! IT'S OBVIOUS THAT YOU'RE HIDING SOMETHING FROM ME! BUT, *WHAT...?*

WARREN ARNO WENT TO BED THAT NIGHT WITH MANY DOUBTS IN HIS MIND ABOUT HIS UNCLE'S SANITY. BOTHERED BY A STRANGE UNEASINESS, HE SLEPT FITFULLY, UNTIL...

IT'S TOO HOT HERE... I--I CAN'T SLEEP! I'LL ...

ARRGHHH-- *HELP!* AROUND MY THROAT--! *ARRRGHH--!*

THEN... IT'S WITHDRAWING INTO THE SWAMP! I--I *COULDN'T* HAVE IMAGINED IT! GOOD LORD! WHAT *WAS* THAT THING? IT GLISTENED IN THE MOONLIGHT!

THE NEXT MORNING, WARREN THOUGHT IT BEST NOT TO MENTION ANYTHING...

GOOD MORNING, NEPHEW! DID YOU HAVE A GOOD SLEEP?

NEVER BETTER! THINK I'LL GO FOR A WALK! OH--BY THE WAY--I'VE CHANGED MY MIND! I'M GOING TO STAY FOR A FEW MORE DAYS!

FOR HE HAD A PLAN-- AND NOW HIS SUSPICIONS WERE STRONGER.

THAT OLD GOAT TRIED TO SCARE ME! PROBABLY HIS CARETAKER IN SOME SORT OF COSTUME! I BET HE'S HIDING GOLD ON THE GROUNDS...

WARREN DUG UP HALF THE PLACE IN SEARCH OF THE TREASURE HE SUSPECTED HIS UNCLE OF HAVING HOARDED. BUT HE FOUND NOTHING! AND THAT EVE-ING...

WHY SHOULD A MAN WANT TO LIVE HERE-- IF NOT FOR SOME WEALTH HE'S CAREFULLY GUARDED. HE'S KNOWN TO BE A MISER...

KNOCK! KNOCK!

YOU!! WHY HAVE YOU COME?

ROBERT! YOU PROMISED TO VISIT MY HOUSE-- AND YOU DID NOT! YOU HAVE A VISITOR?

WELL-HELLO! I DIDN'T KNOW OTHER PEOPLE LIVED HERE! I'M GOING TO LIKE MY STAY HERE!

I SHALL LOOK FORWARD TO YOUR PRESENCE, THEN!

I-I'LL BE OVER TO YOUR HOUSE--LATER! NOW LEAVE THIS HOUSE, AT ONCE!

I SHALL EXPECT YOU! GOOD BYE, MY NEW FRIEND! I SHALL SEE YOU VERY SOON! HA, HA!

UNCLE! YOU TREATED HER SHAMELESSLY! I DEMAND AN EXPLANATION, UNCLE!

WARREN, I--I'M NOT FEELING WELL! HUGO--HELP ME TO MY ROOM!

PUZZLED, WARREN RETIRED TO HIS ROOM... BUT ONLY TO WAIT FOR HIS UNCLE'S FOOTSTEPS... MOMENTS AFTERWARD...

HE'S LEAVING FOR THE SWAMPS! THIS IS GETTING MORE CRAZY BY THE MINUTE! I'LL FOLLOW HIM...

WARREN SHADOWED HIS UNCLE INTO THE FOUL-SMELLING MARSHES...

WHY DID HE SEEM SO SUBSERVIENT TO HER? WHO IS SHE? I MUST FIND--- *UGHHH!* SOMETHING'S GOT ME ABOUT THE ANKLE!

FORGIVE ME IF I WAS TARDY! I--I COULDN'T COME TO YOU WITH MY NEPHEW IN THE HOUSE!

IT IS WELL! FOLLOW ME--INTO THE SWAMP!

I--I OBEY! INTO THE SWAMP!

AND TO MY DEN, WHERE I SHALL FEED ON YOUR OFFERINGS! HA, HA, HA...

THEN, OUT OF THE MORASS AND SWIRLING WATERS OF THE SWAMP, AROSE --- *HORROR!*

AAAAAAGHH! S-STAY AWAY FROM ME! DON'T TOUCH ME!

BANG! BANG! BANG! BANG!

I--I SHOT INTO IT—AND IT WON'T DIE! I'LL TEAR IT AWAY FROM MY THROAT! I'LL RIP IT OFF ME! THERE! HELP! *HELP!*

HE RAN WITH THE DESPERATION OF A MAN POSSESSED! HIS MIND WAS ONE CHAOTIC THOUGHT OF ESCAPE...

YA-A-A-A-AH! I'VE GOT TO GET BACK IN THE HOUSE... PUFF... PUFF...

IT--IT WAS THE SAME *THING* THAT TRIED TO CHOKE ME LAST NIGHT! THAT--THAT WAS *REAL!* WHAT'S GOING ON IN THIS HOUSE ?

WARREN ARNO TIPTOED INTO THE HOUSE, AND WHAT HE SAW LEFT HIM SPEECHLESS!

ANOTHER SACK OF GOLD! I-I CAN'T STAND IT ANYMORE! I--I'LL GO MAD! I MUST TELL SOMEONE! I MUST!

YOU DIRTY MISER! SO THAT'S IT! YOU TRIED TO FRIGHTEN ME! YOU DIDN'T WANT ME TO SEE YOUR GOLD!

NO! YOU DON'T UNDERSTAND! I DISCOVERED A HORROR OUT THERE IN THE SWAMP—WITH AN ALIEN INTELLIGENCE GREATER THAN OUR OWN! I--I'M ITS *SLAVE!* IT GIVES ME GOLD IN RETURN!

YOU DIRTY, OLD LIAR! I'LL CHOKE THE BREATH OUT OF YOUR THROAT!

WARREN-- DON'T! *PLEASE! ARRRGHH!*

WARREN ARNO SQUEEZED UNTIL HIS FINGERS MET IN THEIR OWN EMBRACE OF DEATH. THEN HE WENT GOLD-CRAZY--LAUGHING, SHOUTING, SINGING--UNTIL SOMEONE STOOD BEFORE HIM IN THE DOORWAY...

HA, HA COME IN! I'VE HIT PAYDIRT, BABY! LOOK AT THIS! I'M *RICH!* HA, HA!

THE OLD MAN--HE IS---?

YEAH! I KILLED HIM! I'LL MAKE YOU RICH--- RICHER THAN YOU EVER WERE BEFORE!

AND WHAT OF--HUGO? WHAT SHALL BE DONE WITH HIM? WHO WILL THERE BE TO TAKE CARE OF ME!

I'LL KNOCK HIM OFF, TOO! I'VE KILLED PLENTY OF SQUARES IN MY TIME! THAT'S WHY I'M HERE! BUT NOW WE GOT *MILLIONS*, BOT OF US!

SO YOU WILL TAKE CARE OF ME? THEN YOU DO NOT KNOW! HA, HA! *GOOD!* IT IS EVEN BETTER THAN I HAD WISHED! YES--YOU ARE YOUNG, STRONG! YOU SHALL BE EXCELLENT!

W-WHAT ARE YOU TALKING ABOUT?

YOUR UNCLE'S TASK WAS TO FEED ME WITH MEAT--RED MEAT! I AM THE FIRST OF MY SPECIES ON YOUR PLANET. I MUST GROW! I MUST HAVE SUSTENANCE! YOU WILL HELP ME GROW!

NO! *NO!* YOU'RE CHANGING! I-- I-- DON'T BELIEVE IT! *THE MONSTER FROM THE SWAMPS!*

THE GOLD I GAVE TO ROBERT ARNO WAS FOR--*HIS BODY!* I NEED THE BODY ENERGY OF YOU MORTALS IN ORDER TO LIVE! HE AND HUGO WERE MY MINDLESS SLAVES! BUT FOR YOU--THERE SHALL BE EVEN GREATER GLORY! COME HERE!

AIIEEE!

YOU SHALL BECOME PART OF ME!

KEEP YOUR DROOL BIBS HANDY, KIDDIES, AS YOU READ THIS REVOLTING TALE OF MURDER AND INTRIGUE! IT'S AN EXCITING LITTLE SAGA WE LAUGHINGLY CALL . . .

A POUND of FLESH

H—HERBERT . . . YOU'RE . . . YOU'RE PLAYING A GAME! YOU'RE NOT REALLY GOING TO KILL ME?

I'M SORRY, HILDA, BUT I'M AFRAID I MUST! THERE'S NOTHING ELSE I CAN DO. YOU UNDERSTAND, I'M SURE!

YOUR NAME IS HERBERT PHILLIPS AND YOU'RE THE OWNER OF A SMALL GARAGE LOCATED IN THE MID-WEST. YOU'VE LIVED IN THIS TOWN FOR THIRTY YEARS AND YOU LOVE IT. IT'S YOUR HOME . . .

I SEE YOU'RE STILL NOT TOO OLD TO TINKER AROUND UNDER A HOOD, HERB!

I'LL NEVER GET THAT OLD, DOC! DOESN'T LOOK SERIOUS. YOU CAN PICK THE CAR UP TONIGHT!

YES, HERBERT, YOU LOVE NASHTON. YOU KNOW EVERYONE AND EVERYONE KNOWS YOU.

FINE, HERBIE, FINE! IF I DON'T SEE YOU LATER, SEND MY REGARDS TO HILDA! WONDERFUL WOMAN!

THANKS, DOC! AND SAY HELLO TO AMY FOR ME!

Mysterious Adventures #16, October 1953. Art: Ross Andru. Publisher: Story Comics.

AFTER DOC REID LEAVES YOU SUDDENLY FEEL DEPRESSED, DON'T YOU, HERBERT? COULD IT HAVE BEEN THE REFERENCE TO YOUR WIFE? HILDA HAS BEEN GETTING UNDER YOUR SKIN LATELY, HASN'T SHE? YOU THINK ABOUT IT ON YOUR WAY HOME FROM WORK THAT NIGHT...

IT'S THAT DARN EATING... ALWAYS EATING!

YOU MAKE YOUR WAY INTO THE HOUSE AND THROUGH THE LIVING ROOM OUT TO THE KITCHEN. THERE, AS ALWAYS, IS HILDA . . .

HI, (CHOMP-CHOMP) HONEY! HOME EARLY (CHEW-SLURP) AREN'T YOU?

I WAS A LITTLE TIRED! FOR PETE'S SAKE, HILDA, THIS PLACE LOOKS LIKE A PIGPEN! WHY DON'T YOU CLEAN IT!

DON'T BE SO FINNICKY, HERBERT! IT'S JUST A LITTLE MESSY!

A LITTLE MESSY? DIRTY DISHES, GARBAGE NOT EMPTIED... IT'S SICKENING!

YOU RETIRE TO THE LIVING ROOM AND TRY TO CALM YOURSELF BY READING A NEW SCIENCE-FICTION MAGAZINE. YOU LOVE SCIENCE-FICTION, DON'T YOU, HERBERT? IT HELPS YOU ESCAPE FROM HILDA AND THE FILTHY HOME YOU'RE FORCED TO LIVE IN . . .

HILDA USED TO LOOK LIKE THAT GIRL... BEFORE SHE GOT SO FAT!

GLORY

AS YOU LOOK AT THE PICTURE IN THE MAGAZINE YOU REMEMBER HILDA AS SHE WAS WHEN YOU FIRST MET HER . . .

YOU... YOU MEAN YOU'LL GO TO THE DANCE WITH ME, HILDA?

I'D LOVE TO, HERBERT. YOU'RE NICER THAN THE OTHER FELLAS... NOT SO SMART-ALECKY OR FRESH!

YOU THOUGHT YOU WERE A LUCKY FELLOW IN THOSE DAYS, DIDN'T YOU, HERBERT? WHEN HILDA SAID SHE'D MARRY YOU, YOU COULD HARDLY BELIEVE YOUR EARS . . .

OH, HILDA, I — I DIDN'T THINK I HAD A CHANCE!

HONEY, YOU'RE SO SILLY! I LOVE YOU!

ME-691

BUT THAT WAS FIFTEEN YEARS AGO AND THINGS HAVE CHANGED SINCE THEN . . . ESPECIALLY HILDA . . .

WAKE UP, DEARIE, DINNER'S READY... AND IT'S GOING TO BE DELICIOUS! MASHED POTATOES, FRIED CHICKEN, DUMPLINGS, CREAM PIE AND . . .

ALL RIGHT, HILDA, ALL RIGHT!

YOU'RE A LIGHT EATER, HERBERT, AND YOU FINISH DINNER LONG BEFORE HILDA. YOU WATCH HER AS SHE GORGES HERSELF, MOUTHFUL AFTER MOUTHFUL...

WHAT'S THE MATTER, HONEY, (CHEW-SLURP) AREN'T YOU (CHOMP-CHOMP) HUNGRY TONIGHT?

NO, NOT VERY.

GOD, SHE'S REVOLTING!

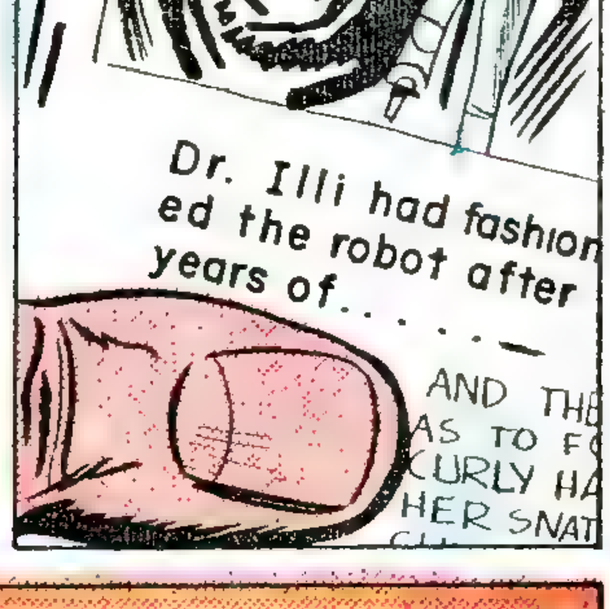
HILDA, HAVE... HAVE YOU EVER CONSIDERED GOING ON A DIET?

DIET? (CHEW-SLURP) HEAVENS, NO! I LOVE (CHOMP-CHEW) FOOD! WHAT EVER PUT THAT IDEA INTO YOUR HEAD, HERBERT?

REMEMBER, (BURP) HONEY, THIS WAY, THERE'S TWICE AS MUCH OF ME TO LOVE! (BUR-R-RP!)

TWICE TOO MUCH TO LOVE!

AFTER DINNER, AS YOU'VE DONE SO OFTEN IN THE PAST FEW YEARS, YOU GO DOWNSTAIRS TO YOUR WORKSHOP... BUT, INSTEAD OF WORKING, YOU PICK UP THE INEVITABLE SCIENCE FICTION MAGAZINE...



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AND THE
AS TO F
CURLY HA
HER SNAT

YOU READ LATE INTO THE EVENING, AVOIDING ALL CONTACT WITH HILDA ...AND THEN YOU FALL ASLEEP IN THE EASY CHAIR YOU'VE MOVED INTO THE WORKSHOP..

DARLING BOY, WAKE-UP! YOU'VE FALLEN SOUND ASLEEP READING THOSE SILLY MAGAZINES!

HUH? ...WH...

THE PRESSURE OF HILDA'S 200 POUNDS CRASHING DOWN ONTO YOUR LAP AWAKENS YOU IMMEDIATELY AND YOU FIND YOURSELF STARING UP INTO HER GROSS OBESE FACE...

HILDA, (GROAN) FOR GOD'S SAKE, YOU'RE CRUSHING ME!

AS SHE TRIES TO KISS YOU, YOU FEEL YOURSELF GETTING SICK-AT-YOUR-STOMACH.. YOU CAN'T BEAR TO HAVE HER NEAR YOU...

HERBERT, YOU'RE SUCH A CARD! NOW KISS ME, DEAR BOY! TEEHEEHE!

NO! LET ME UP, HILDA!

YOU HURRY UPSTAIRS AND QUICKLY GET INTO BED...BUT YOU CAN'T SLEEP, CAN YOU, HERBERT? YOU LAY THERE FOR HOURS WHILE HILDA SNORES LOUDLY AT YOUR SIDE...

SNORE SNZZZZ..

SHE'S ALMOST LIKE--LIKE AN ANIMAL!

WHEN YOU FINALLY FALL INTO A TROUBLED SLEEP IT'S ALMOST DAYBREAK. YOU TOSS RESTLESSLY, DREAMS EXPLODING FROM YOUR SUBCONSCIOUS...

HILDA! HONEY, YOU'VE CHANGED ...YOU LOOK LIKE YOU USED TO!

OF COURSE, DARLING! DIDN'T YOU WANT ME TO?

IT'S A WONDERFUL DREAM, ISN'T IT, HERBERT? YOU TAKE HILDA INTO YOUR ARMS AND KISS HER... KISS HER AS YOU HAVE NOT DONE IN TEN YEARS...

BUT THEN THE DREAM CHANGES...IN FACT, IT'S NO LONGER A DREAM... IT'S A NIGHTMARE!

TEE HEE...TEE HEE! DON'T RUN AWAY, HERBERT! I LOVE YOU! TEE HEE... TEE HEE!

GET AWAY FROM ME! DON'T COME NEAR ME!

YOU AWAKEN IN A COLD SWEAT, YOUR NERVES RAGGED AND RAW. AND THEN IT HITS YOU... AN IDEA! AN IDEA WHICH WILL CHANGE YOUR LIFE!

THAT'S IT! OF COURSE! I'LL DO IT! I'LL MAKE HER JUST LIKE SHE WAS BEFORE!

YES, HERBERT, YOU DECIDE TO MAKE A ROBOT! A ROBOT THAT LOOKS LIKE HILDA DID 15 YEARS AGO! AT FIRST IT SOUNDS CRAZY...BUT WHAT THE HECK, YOU'RE A TOP MECHANIC! IF IT CAN BE DONE, YOU ARE THE MAN TO DO IT!

CALL THE GARAGE AND TELL THEM I WON'T BE IN TODAY, HILDA! I'LL BE IN THE WORKSHOP IF YOU WANT ME!

SURE (CHEW--SLURP), HONEY!

THIS IS TO BE YOUR WORK OF ART, HERBERT... YOUR MASTERPIECE. IN THE DAYS THAT FOLLOW YOU FORGET EVERYTHING BUT YOUR "CREATION".

HERE'S YOUR LUNCH, HERBERT! WHAT ON EARTH ARE YOU DOING DOWN HERE? YOU HAVEN'T BEEN TO BED IN TWO NIGHTS NOW!

BUT YOU HAVEN'T TIME FOR BED, HAVE YOU, HERBERT? IN A WEEK YOU COMPLETE THE INSIDE MECHANISM...AND THEN YOUR TROUBLES BEGIN . . .

SO FAR, SO GOOD...BUT WHERE DO I GO FROM HERE? HOW IN HECK DO I COVER THE INSIDES? WHAT'LL I USE FOR SKIN?

FIRST YOU TRY RUBBER. . .

NO, THAT WON'T WORK! IT LOOKS TOO PHONEY!

THEN YOU TRY A PLASTIC COMPOUND . . .

NUTS! THIS STUFF IS TOO THICK! EVERYTIME SHE MOVED THE SKIN WOULD CRACK WIDE-OPEN!

AFTER A WEEK OF EXPERIMENTATION YOU START TO GROW DESPERATE...NOTHING YOU USE GIVES A SATISFACTORY RESULT .

I'VE TRIED EVERYTHING.. LEATHER, RUBBER, PLASTIC! NOTHING LOOKS LIKE SKIN!

THERE SEEMS TO BE NO ANSWER. IT LOOKS LIKE YOU'RE DEFEATED, HERBERT.

YOU MEAN (CHOMP-CHOMP) YOU'RE FINALLY FINISHED DOWNSTAIRS?

YES, HILDA, (SIGH) I'M FINISHED.

YOU TRY TO FORGET THE WHOLE IDEA...BUT IT WON'T GO AWAY. IN THE BACK OF YOUR MIND, IT'S ALWAYS THERE...NAGGING AT YOU, TAUNTING YOU..

MAYBE OILCLOTH MIGHT DO IT. IF I...

HERBERT PHILLIPS, WHAT'S THE MATTER WITH YOU? YOU'VE BEEN MUTTERING ALL NIGHT!

YOU LOOK AT HILDA AS SHE TALKS. SHE'S SO REPULSIVE THAT YOU FEEL YOURSELF BECOMING NAUSEUS. . .

YOU (SLOP-SLURP) WORRY TOO MUCH, HONEY! YOU SHOULD BE MORE LIKE ME! WHENEVER I'M UPSET... I HAVE A LITTLE SNACK!

FINALLY, IN SHEER DESPERATION, YOU TELL HILDA ABOUT THE ROBOT. MAYBE, IF SHE KNOWS HOW MISERABLE YOU ARE OVER HER WEIGHT, SHE'LL GO ON A DIET...

IT—IT ISN'T THAT I DON'T LOVE YOU, DEAR. IT'S JUST THAT...

OH, HERBERT, YOU SILLY LAMB! IMAGINE, GOING TO ALL THAT BOTHER!

WHY, TEE HEE, TEE HEE, YOU'RE CRAZY! A ROBOT! TEE HEE, TEE HEE! TOO BAD, DARLING, YOU'LL HAVE TO TAKE ME THE WAY I AM! DIET... NEVER! TEE HEE, TEE HEE!

YOU WATCH HER AS SHE SITS THERE, HER MOUNTAINS OF FLESH DOUBLED TOGETHER IN LAUGHTER.. SUDDENLY YOU KNOW THAT YOU CAN STAND IT NO LONGER..

YOU FAT SLOB! IF YOU THINK I'M GOING TO LIVE LIKE THIS FOREVER, YOU'RE CRAZY!

NOW, HERBERT, CALM DOWN! YOU'RE...

ALL THE TENSIONS AND HATREDS OF THE LAST MONTH FINALLY EXPLODE WITHIN YOU. YOU'RE LIKE A MADMAN, HERBERT...

YOU MAKE ME SICK, DO YOU HEAR? SICK ...SICK... *SICK!*

HERBERT! PUT THAT KNIFE DOWN! S-STOP IT!

BUT BY NOW NOTHING CAN STOP YOU...THERE'S MURDER IN YOUR HEART, HERBERT...

YOU'VE STUFFED THE LAST CHOCOLATE INTO THAT BIG MOUTH, HILDA! NO MORE SUNDAES...NO MORE CAKES ...NO MORE ANYTHING!

FOR GOD'S SAKE, DON'T... *DON'T...*

THE KNIFE RISES AND FALLS...RISES AND FALLS...

...AND THEN THE ROOM IS SILENT...AND CRUMPLED IN A HEAP AT YOUR FEET IS HILDA...

D-DEAR GOD, W-WHAT HAVE I DONE? SHE ...SHE'S DEAD!

YOU'RE ALMOST FROZEN WITH TERROR, AREN'T YOU, HERBERT? AFTER ALL, MURDER IS NOTHING TO SNEER AT! YOU DRAG HILDA'S BODY DOWN THE CELLAR STEPS AND INTO THE WORK SHOP...

I'LL TELL EVERYBODY SHE WENT TO VISIT HER MOTHER UNEXPECTEDLY.

AND NO ONE QUESTIONS YOUR STORY. WHY SHOULD THEY? ISN'T IT PERFECTLY NATURAL FOR A GIRL TO VISIT HER MOTHER...?

SO YOU'RE A BACHELOR FOR AWHILE, EH, HERB? YOU'LL HAVE TO COME UP TO THE HOUSE FOR DINNER.

THANKS, DOC, I'D LIKE TO! AMY'S A FINE COOK!

EVERY NIGHT, LONG AFTER MOST OF NASHTON'S CITIZENRY HAS RETIRED, YOU WORK LATE IN THE BASEMENT...

IT IS NOW TWO WEEKS LATER, AND AT LAST, ALL IS READY...YOU INVITE DOCTOR REID AND HIS WIFE TO DINNER...

COME ON IN, DOC! GOOD TO SEE YOU AGAIN, AMY! YOU PEOPLE WERE SO SWELL TO ME WHILE HILDA WAS GONE, THAT I WANTED TO REPAY YOUR KINDNESS!

I DIDN'T KNOW HILDA WAS BACK!

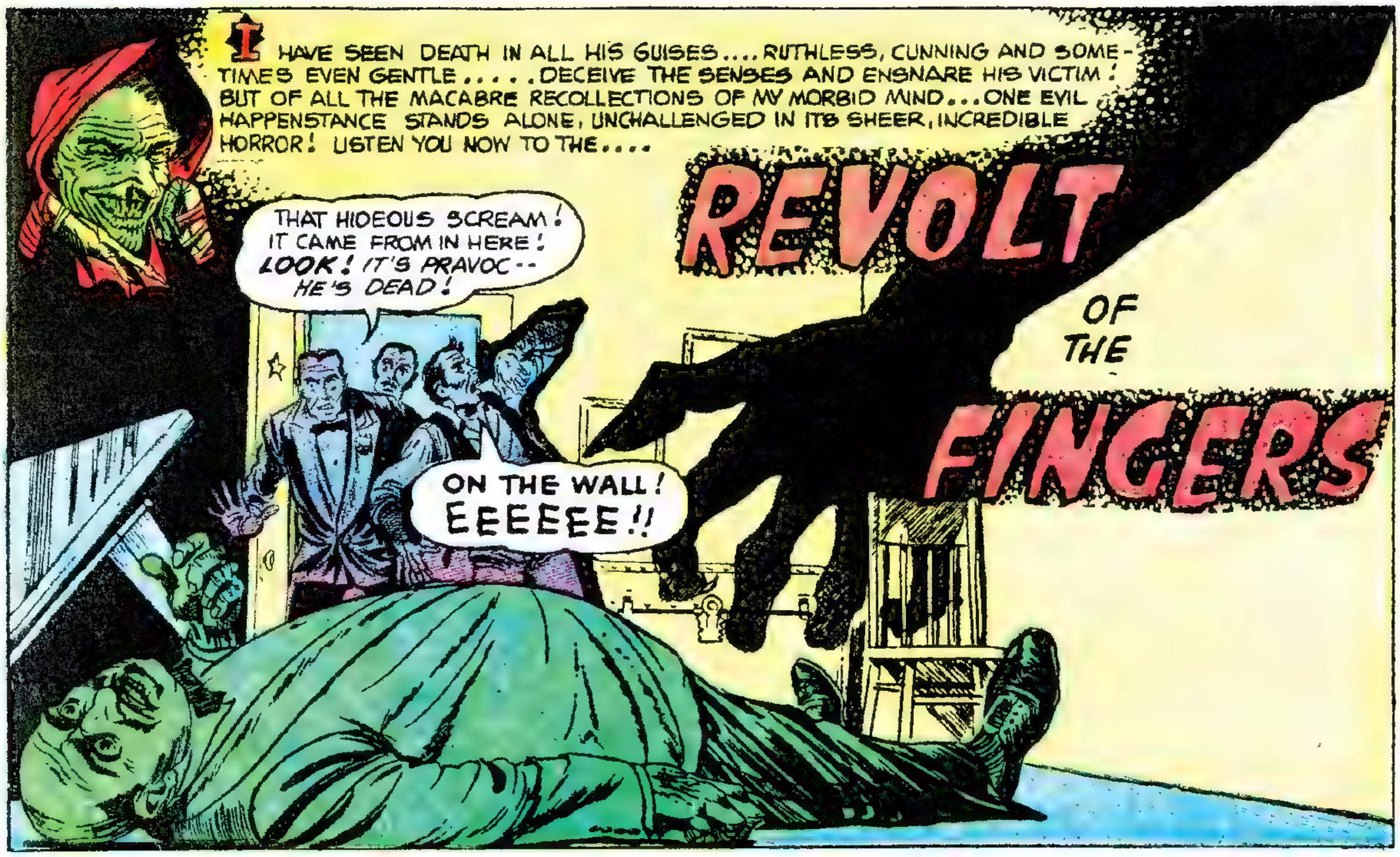
SHE GOT IN LATE LAST NIGHT. HILDA, HONEY, COME SAY HELLO TO DOC AND AMY!

WHY, HILDA, YOU LOOK MARVELOUS! THAT TRIP DID WONDERS FOR YOU!

MY DEAR, YOU LOOK TEN YEARS YOUNGER! YOU MUST HAVE LOST AT LEAST 70 POUNDS!

AND SO YOUR EXPERIMENT IS A SUCCESS, HERBERT. IT WAS SO SIMPLE, WASN'T IT? ALL YOU HAD TO DO WAS SKIN HILDA AND DO A NEAT LITTLE SEWING JOB... YOUR ROBOT IS PERFECT!

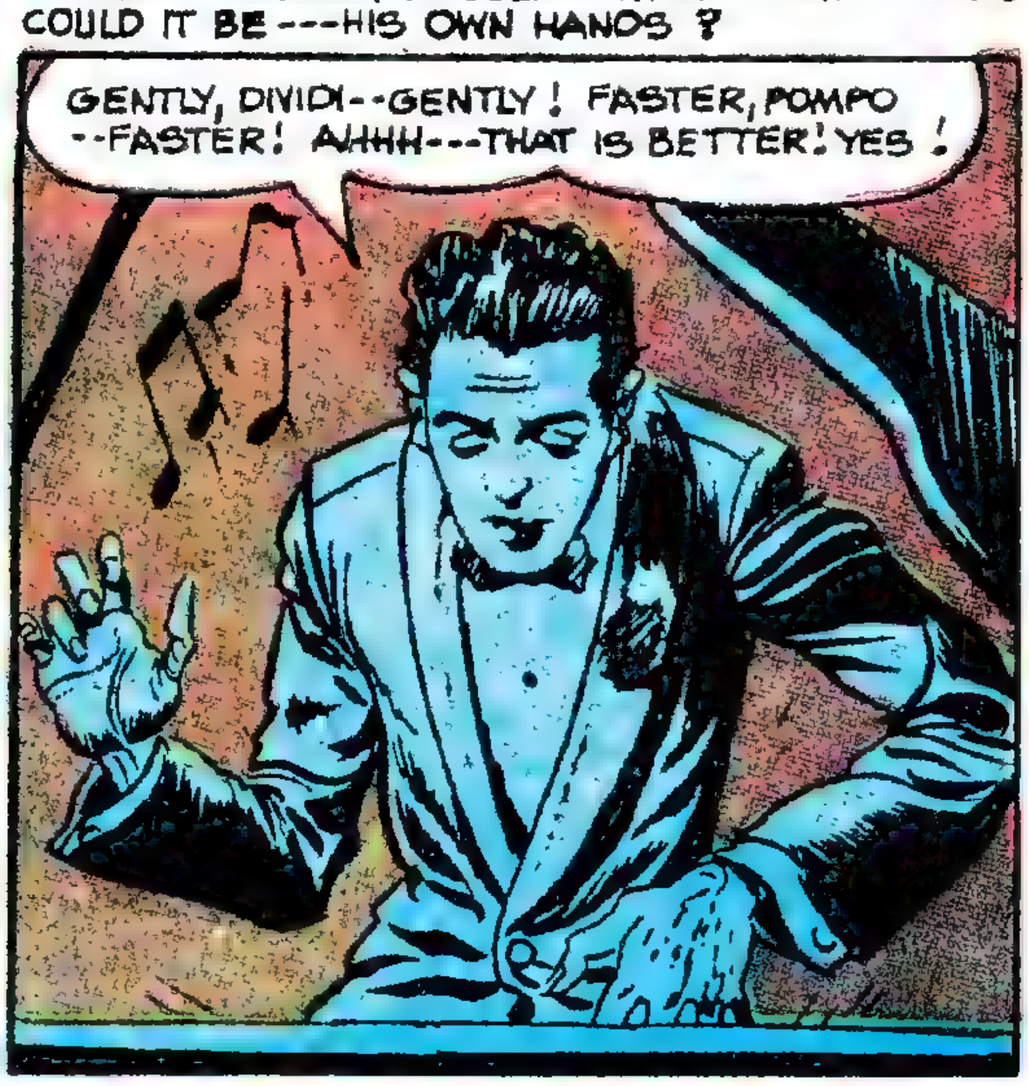
THE END


I HAVE SEEN DEATH IN ALL HIS GUISES....RUTHLESS, CUNNING AND SOMETIMES EVEN GENTLE.....DECEIVE THE SENSES AND ENSNARE HIS VICTIM! BUT OF ALL THE MACABRE RECOLLECTIONS OF MY MORBID MIND...ONE EVIL HAPPENSTANCE STANDS ALONE, UNCHALLENGED IN ITS SHEER, INCREDIBLE HORROR! LISTEN YOU NOW TO THE....
REVOLT OF THE FINGERS
THAT HIDEOUS SCREAM! IT CAME FROM IN HERE! LOOK! IT'S PRAVOC-- HE'S DEAD!
ON THE WALL! EEEEEE!!

FROM THE WINGS OF THE NINDLEM CONSERVATORY, THE SWARTHY, PONDEROUS, BEETLE-BROWED PRAVOK MUTTERED IN GROWING AGITATION AS HIS EYES GLOWERED AT THE SLENDER FIGURE UPON THE STAGE.

WHY MUST THE IDIOT TALK TO HIMSELF AS HE PLAYS? HIS VOICE BECOMES LOUDER ALL THE TIME! THEY WILL HEAR IT IN THE AUDIENCE-- WHAT THEN?

ONSTAGE, ANTONINI BELLT TOUCHED THE KEYBOARD OF HIS INSTRUMENT LIKE RAYS OF LIGHT AND THE MUSIC LEAPED INTO VIBRANT LIFE----A FLAME OF EMOTION! BUT TO WHOM WAS HE TALKING, COAXING, CAJOLING WITH EVERY CHORD? COULD IT BE---HIS OWN HANDS?



Beware! Horror Tales #4, November 1954. Art: Bob McCarty. Publisher: Fawcett.

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And visit **Yoe Books.com** to keep up on all the creepiest books of vintage rotgut horror!

FOR AN INSTANT, FEAR CROSSED THE YOUNG PIANIST'S FACE AND THEN HE SPOKE SHARPLY!

DIVIDI, NO! IT IS NOT YOUR TURN TO PLAY! LET POMPO ALONE! Y-YOU--YOU JEALOUS FOOL!

THERE IS SOMETHING STRANGE ABOUT THAT YOUNG MAN!

TO WHOM WAS HE SPEAKING?

THE APPLAUSE AT THE FINIS DROWNED OUT THE WHISPERINGS IN THE AUDIENCE. ANTONINI STRODE OFF THE STAGE LOOKING TENSE, UPSET. HE DID NOT ACKNOWLEDGE THE PLAUDITS OF THE CROWD.

ENCORE! BELLT! ENCORE!

GO BACK! PLAY AGAIN--PLAY AGAIN, I SAY!

NO..NO!! I CAN'T DO IT!

I'LL TEACH YOU TO DISOBEY ME!

UNHH!

SMACK!

THE IMPRINT OF HIS HUGE, BLUBBERRY HAND STOOD OUT STARK AND LIVID ON THE CRINGING BOY'S CHEEK! HE QUIVERED BENEATH THE ENRAGED ASSAULT OF PROVAK!

THIS IS NOT A GAME! I HAVE NOT PICKED YOU UP FROM THE GUTTER, SWEATED OVER YOU TO THEN HAVE YOU RUIN EVERYTHING!

I AM NOT PLAYING A GAME! IT IS DIVIDI! THE STUBBORN EGOTIST IS COMPLAINING ABOUT NOT HAVING ENOUGH TO DO IN THE PERFORMANCE! EACH HAND HAS HIS OWN INDEPENDENT CHARACTER AND PERSONALITY, PROVAK!

IDIOT! ARE YOU LOSING YOUR MIND? PUT YOUR HAND DOWN--EEEEEE!

SCRATCH!

YOU DARE TO GASH MY HAND?

NO! IT WAS NOT MY DOING! IT WAS--DIVIDI'S!

THE BLOOD RUSHED APOPLECTICALLY TO PROVAK'S BEEFY FACE. HE SEIZED THE BOY'S COAT IN A SPASM OF RE-PRESSED RAGE, AND...

PUT THIS COAT ON--QUICKLY! I WANT TO GET YOU OUT OF HERE! MAYBE I'LL BE ABLE TO TALK SOME SENSE INTO YOU!

PLEASE--I-I DON'T WANT TO PLAY ANY MORE! I HATE IT! NO LONGER IS IT A JOY!

I WANT TO BE LIKE ANY OTHER YOUNG MAN--AN ORDINARY JOB! A CONVENTIONAL LIFE!

PUT YOUR LEFT HAND THROUGH THIS SLEEVE! WHY DO YOU HOLD IT SO STIFFLY? RELAX IT--I TELL YOU!

IT IS NOT MY DOING! DIVIDI, HE DOES NOT LIKE---

DIVIDI! DIVIDI! YOU FABRICATOR! THERE, I TORE THE SLEEVE, BUT I FORCED **YOUR** DIVIDI THROUGH!

R-RIP!

OUT NOW! OUT! I'LL TAKE YOU TO THE PIER! MAYBE THE SALT AIR WILL CLEAR YOUR MUDDLED BRAIN!

EXIT

#3

PROVAK DRAGGED THE BOY OUT OF THE CONSERVATORY INTO THE DAMP, FOGGY NIGHT. AT THE WATERFRONT, HE SHOUTED AT THE TOP OF HIS LUNGS, THREATENED, CAJOLED!

THE NEXT FOUR DAYS WILL SPELL FAILURE OR SUCCESS! AND I INTEND TO RIDE THE CREST OF SUCCESS! AFTER THAT---**WE'LL BE RICH!** EVEN ROYALTY WILL ATTEND YOUR BIG CONCERT!

I DON'T CARE FOR THE MONEY! I WANT **PEACE!** I DON'T WANT TO PLAY ANY MORE! YOU'VE TAKEN ALL THE JOY OUT OF MY MUSIC! AND NOW DIVIDI--

THE TEARS QUIVERED ON THE BOY'S LIDS.

FEELING THAT HE WAS MAKING NO IMPRES-SION, PROVAK SEIZED HIM, AND--

COME! I WILL TAKE YOU BACK TO THE HOTEL!

LET GO OF THE RAILING! **LET GO!**

DIVIDI---RELEASE ME, PLEASE!

PROVAK GRABBED THE LAD ABOUT THE WAIST AND PULLED IN A WILD FURY! THEN---

UHHHH!

CRACK!

STOP! LOOK OUT!

HELP! HELP!

SPLASH

FOR SEVERAL UNENDURABLE MINUTES THEY FLOUNDERED IN THE WATER, CONTINUING THEIR SHOUTS OF ALARM. AT LAST--

T-THANK YOU...D-DOES SOMEONE HAVE A CAR? DRIVE US TO THE MARBENE HOTEL! I WILL PAY YOU WELL!

HERE, LET ME HELP YOU OUT! I'LL DRIVE YOU TO YOUR HOTEL!

AT THE HOTEL, PROVAK SAW TO IT THAT THE BOY WAS CAREFULLY DRIED, SELFISHLY AFRAID HE MIGHT CONTRACT SOME ILLNESS. DROWSINESS WEIGHTED THE BOY'S LIDS.

ASLEEP...GOOD! I WAS FEARFUL OF A CHILL--A FEVER! BUT HE'LL BE ABLE TO PLAY TOMORROW!

EH? W-WHAT IS THIS?

BEFORE HIS HORRIFIED EYES HE WATCHED THE BOY'S LEFT HAND, SEEMINGLY WITH A LIFE OF ITS OWN, CRAWLING TO THE ICE WATER PITCHER ON THE TABLE! CRAWLING LIKE A TARANTULA!

STOP IT! GET AWAY FROM THAT!

AIEEE!! W-WHAT IS HAPPENING? WHAT ARE YOU DOING?

KRASH!

DON'T PRETEND YOU'VE JUST AWAKENED! I KNOW WHAT YOU WERE UP TO! YOU WERE GOING TO THROW THAT PITCHER AT ME!

NO--NO! YOU'RE WRONG! CAN'T YOU UNDERSTAND? I'M NOT TO BLAME FOR DIVIDI'S ACTIONS!

YOU'RE NOT TO BLAME, EH? ALL RIGHT--I'LL SEE THAT YOUR HAND DOESN'T GET INTO ANY MORE TROUBLE!

PROVAK GRAPPLED WITH THE HAND THAT STRUGGLED AND FLAILED LIKE A COBRA! HE BOUND HIS LEATHER BELT AROUND IT!

THERE! IT WILL DO NO MISCHIEF! AND SHOULD YOU DARE REMOVE IT---I WILL PLACE YOU IN A STRAIT JACKET! IT WILL BE FREED ONLY FOR PRACTICE! THE REST OF THE TIME I WILL WATCH OVER YOU!

THE PASSING DAYS WERE LIKE A NIGHTMARE OF VIGILANCE FOR PROVAK! ONE DAY, TWO DAYS, THREE DAYS HE RESTRAINED THE WILD THRASHING OF THE BELLIGERENT HAND!

THEN, THE LONG AWAITED DAY OF THE BIG CONCERT! FOR A RARE MOMENT, THE IMPRESARIO WAS IN AN EXPANSIVE MOOD! THE TIME FOR HIS TRIUMPH HAD ARRIVED! TRIUMPH AND WEALTH THROUGH THE BOY!

THE HOUSE IS PACKED! THE GLITTER OF THE WEALTHY, THE FAMOUS NAMES -- THE ROYALTY! AFTER THIS, THERE SHALL BE LUXURY! THE FINEST FRUITS OF LIFE! AHHHHH!

WHY ARE YOU SITTING THERE LIKE THAT? WHY ARE YOU NOT DOING YOUR CUSTOMARY FINGER EXERCISES TO LIMBER UP?

DIVIDI REFUSES TO PLAY TONIGHT! I CANNOT GO ON!

I--I CAN DO NOTHING! I AM POWERLESS! SEE FOR YOURSELF! BELIEVE ME!

THE FINGERS WERE GROTESQUELY CURLED! PROVAK WENT WILD AT THAT INSTANT! RAGE ENGULFED REASON! HE RAISED HIS HAM-LIKE FISTS AND....

SO YOU WON'T PLAY? I-I'LL SHOW YOU!

NO, PROVAK! DON'T! I--I BEG YOU!

...STRUCK DOWN UPON THE OBJECT OF HIS MALEVOLENCE!

AND AGAIN-- AGAIN --AND AGAIN!

YIII!!

THE BOY SUFFERED UNSPEAKABLE AGONY FROM THE HAMMERING BLOWS! HE TRIED TO WITHDRAW HIS HAND--BUT HE SLIPPED OUT OF THE CHAIR--- FELL! PROVAK FELL UPON HIM! THE LAD STRUGGLED FEEBLY AND THEN UNCONSCIOUSNESS BLOTTED OUT THE PAIN!

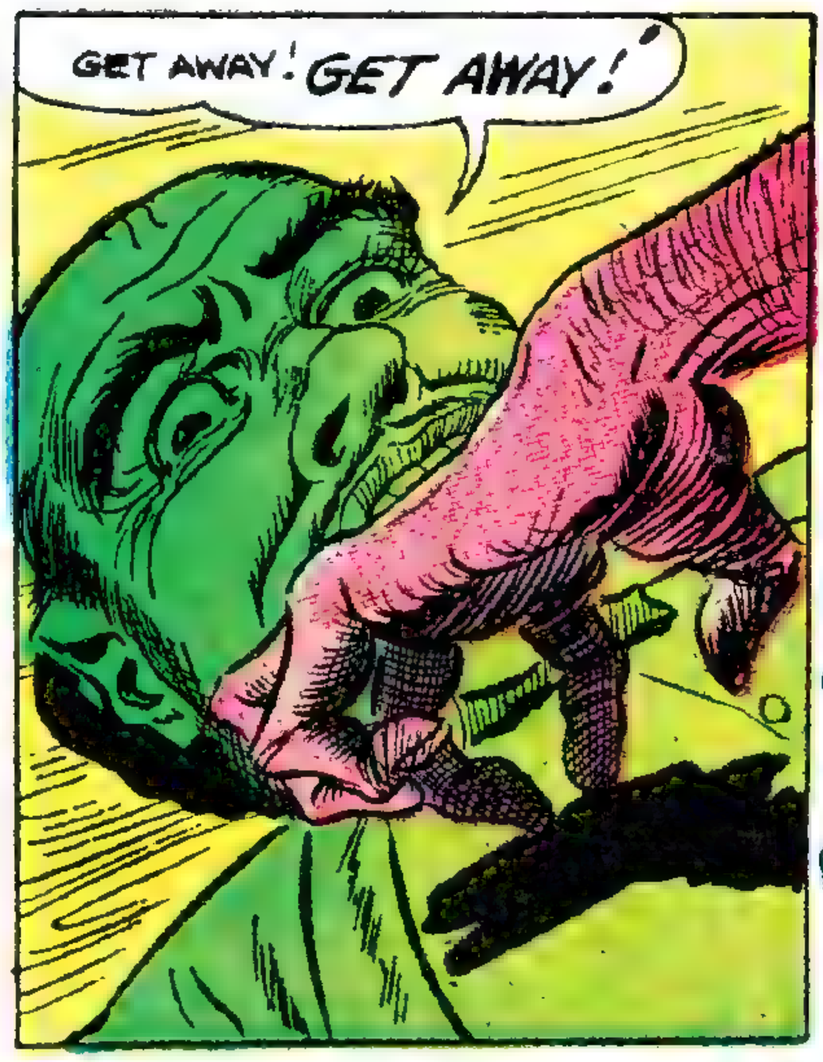
MY HEART! THE EXERTION... TOO MUCH!

THE PONDEROUS IMPRESARIO LAY BACK, BREATHING HEAVILY---HIS BULK OVERSTRAINED. GASPING AND INERT, HE WAS MOMENTARILY HELPLESS! HE COULD NOT MOVE A MUSCLE IN HIS BODY! SUDDENLY--

OHHH!

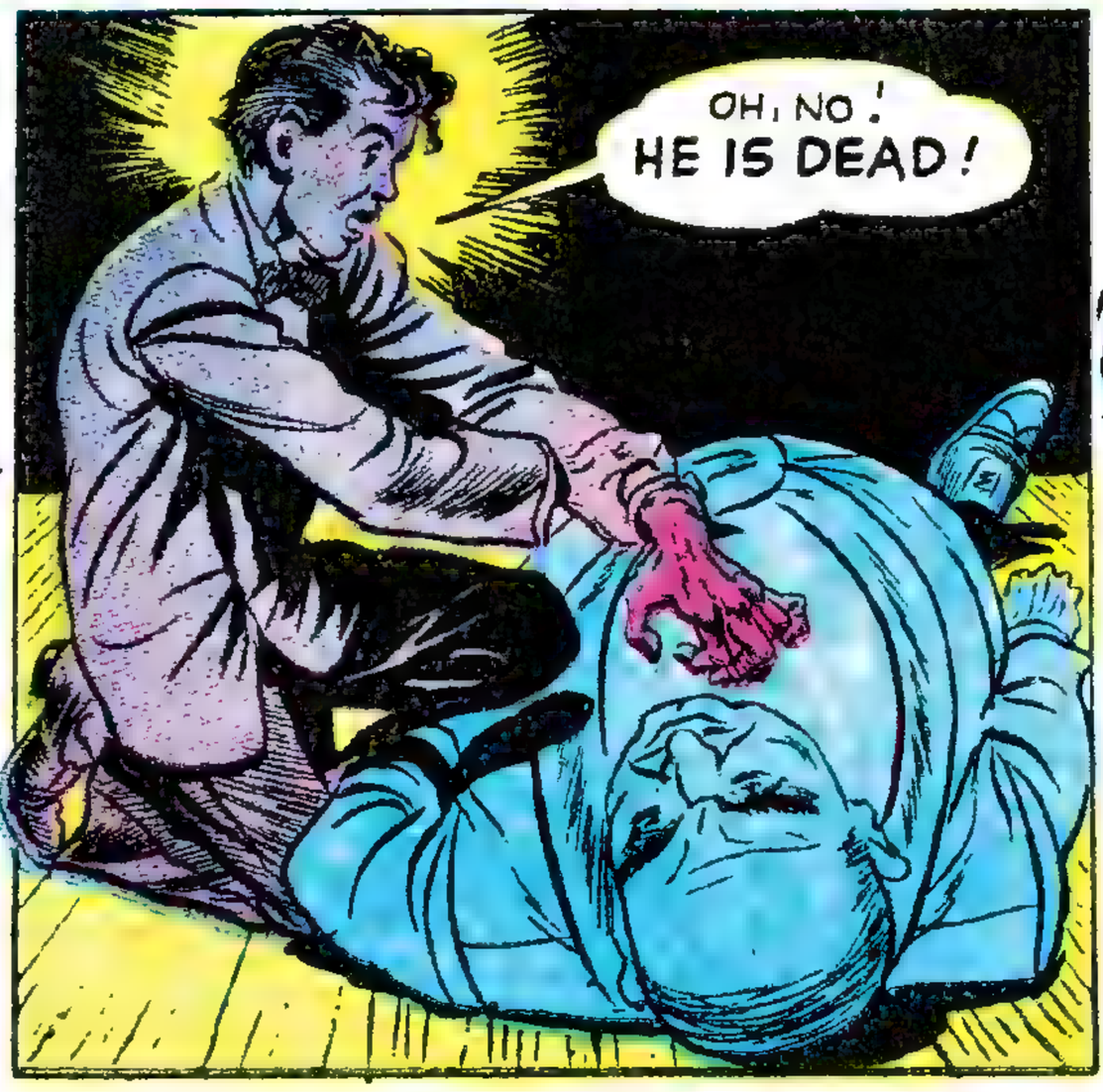
AIEEEE!!

THERE WAS SOMETHING UPON HIS CHEST, SOMETHING CRAWLING, **CRAWLING** --TOWARD HIS THROAT! DESPERATELY, HE TRIED TO MOVE, TO RAISE HIMSELF, TO ROLL OVER-- BUT NOT A NERVE INSIDE HIM WOULD RESPOND!



HIS CRIES WENT UNHEEDED! THE BOY'S EYES WERE CLOSED, HIS BODY IN REPOSE---EXCEPT FOR **DIVIDI**-- **THE LEFT HAND!** THE GRIP TIGHTENED LIKE STEEL! THE HAND HAD A STRENGTH THE BOY NEVER POSSESSED!

THE SCREAM BECAME A HOARSE, MUFFLED CRY --THE CRY A WHIMPER... A COUGH... AND THEN, **SILENCE** AND BLACK-NESS, **ETERNAL BLACKNESS!** SOME TIME LATER, THE BOY OPENED HIS EYES AND BECAME AWARE OF THE TRAGEDY THAT HAD TRANSPIRED! THE SHOCK CONVULSED HIS FRAIL BODY!



THEN, THE INEXORABLE WHEELS OF THE LAW BEGAN THEIR TURNING. AND SOON, THE BOY, AGHEN GRAY, SICK INSIDE, TRIED TO BEAR UP UNDER THE ORDEAL BEFORE HIM!

HE WAS ALONE IN THE ROOM WITH THE VICTIM --AND HE HATED HIM! THIS--BY HIS OWN ADMISSION! MURDER IS HIS SIN---AND I PROPOSE DEATH AS HIS PENALTY!

AFTER ALL IS SAID AND DONE---WE KNOW WITHOUT DOUBT, THAT A BOY SO FRAIL, SO DELICATE, COULD NEVER THROTTLE A MAN OF PROVAK'S STRENGTH! THE MURDER WAS PERFORMED WITH ONE HAND!

THE MINUTES CONSUMED THE HOURS AND DAYS WITH EXCRUCIATING SLOWNESS.. ..AND AT LAST THE VERDICT!

WE THE JURY FIND THE DEFENDANT --NOT GUILTY!

CONGRATULATIONS, BOY! YOU'RE FREE NOW! FREE!

YOU CAN MAKE A FRESH START!

FREE THEY SAID! BUT THE BOY FELT NO FREEDOM IN HIS HEART... HAD NO FREEDOM!

BEFORE HIM.. DAY AND NIGHT, MOMENT ON MOMENT, HE SAW A HAND--- AN EVIL OFFENDING MEMBER WHO HAD TAKEN A LIFE!

DIVIDI IS A MURDERER! A MURDERER! A MURDERER!! AND HE IS WITH ME EVERYWHERE!

His dazed, tortured mind longed for sleep---but he dared not! Six hundred minutes between darkness and light! Thirty-six thousand seconds of silent, heart-quaking vigilance!

KEEP THE GLOVE ON! KEEP IT ON THAT I NEED NOT FACE THE SHAME OF YOU AND YOUR EVIL!

DIVIDI WILL NOT WEAR...SOB...THE GLOVE! AND I CANNOT TOLERATE THE SIGHT OF HIM!..SOB..

WHAT ARE YOU DOING? NO!-- PUT THAT DOWN!

The weapon gleamed in the half light and arced its way like a striking serpent! He screamed, struggled, fought with every remnant of waning strength.

DIVIDI—NO! STOP IT! MURDERER!

THEN....

--I--I CAN'T FIGHT ANY LONGER!..SOB.. AND---I DON'T WANT TO! I WANT REST...REST! DO YOUR EVIL WORST, DIVIDI!

AND SO OUR STORY ENDS!--AHH, THEY SAY ONE HAND WASHES THE OTHER---BUT EVEN YOU WOULD NOT RELISH A BLOOD BATH!

HEH-HEH-HEH!

The struggle was brief....and Antonini Bellt felt nothing! His senses---all but the sense of sound were numbed--and he heard only the tranquil harmonies of his music that would live forever!

KOHNOOR'S CURSE

YIP-YIP-YIP
BAM!
BAM!
WHERE A WEATHERED STONE MONSTER GUARDS A CRUMBLING INDIAN SHRINE AND A JACKAL BAYS TO THE MOON, TWO TRAVELERS HALT, SUDDENLY A PISTOL GLEAMS IN THE HAND OF ONE OF THEM, AND ROARS TO LIFE!
THE OLD INDIAN GUIDE GASPS AS HE COLLAPSES...
YOU HAVE WON, SAHIB... YOU HAVE WON!
THERE IS NO MERCY, NO REGRET IN THIS RUTHLESS KILLER...
ROCKY SHANNON ALWAYS WINS, ABA KALIM. AND THIS TIME IT'S A KING'S RANSOM IN JEWELS!
MINE...ALL MINE! I'LL SOON HAVE THIS TUMBLED-DOWN PASSAGE TO THE JEWELS CLEARED...
BUT...WAIT! IS IT ONLY THE NIGHT WIND WAILING AS HE LABORS?

Monster #2, 1953. Art: Bill Discount. Publisher: Fiction House.

OR IS IT THE VOICE OF THE SPIRIT-SHAPE THAT RISES FROM HIS MURDER VICTIM?

BEWARE, SAHIB...BEWARE OF KOHNOORI'S CURSE! REMEMBER? I TOLD YOU OF IT ON THE TRAIL...

"THEN LIKE A MAGNET, THE JEWELS LED A KILLER'S DAGGER TO KOHNOORI'S LAIR..."

"THE JEWELS WERE BROUGHT TO A SHRINE BY A JUNGLE TRIBE CENTURIES AGO AS AN OFFERING TO ITS GODS..."

WE HAVE BROUGHT ALL THE WEALTH OF OUR TRIBE TO OUR GODS...THUS IS THE VISION AND THE COMMAND OF KOHNOORI FULFILLED!

"KOHNOORI, THE MYSTIC, PLANNED THIS RICH TREK! KOHNOORI, THE DEVOUT, WHO LED HIS TRIBESMEN IN A FALSE RITUAL OF LOVE, WHOSE OWN GOD WAS GREED-- THIS KOHNOORI RETURNED TO THE SHRINE AND **SEIZED THE TREASURE!**

HHHYYY

THE PICK IN SHANNON'S HAND BIT INTO THE SOFT EARTH. THE QUAVERING VOICE SPOKE SOFTLY...

THUS DID THE FIRST VICTIM OF THE CURSE PAY, UNBELIEVER, BUT HE WAS NOT THE LAST...

"THE JEWELS NEXT FOUND THEIR WAY TO A FAMED AND MIGHTY MAHARAJAH.. HIS PEOPLE LOVED HIM...HE WAS OF GOOD HEART..."

A TIDBIT FOR YOU, MY CHILD... NOW GO AND PLAY!

"BUT WITH THE COMING OF THE TREASURE, HE CHANGED..IT SEEMED TO GRIP HIM IN A SPELL...

"HIS SERVANTS SHRANK FROM HIM IN TREMBLING FEAR..."

BY THE GODS... NO! IT CANNOT BE!

"AND HIS COURTYARD RANG DAILY WITH THE SCREAMS OF THE SLAVES HE CONDEMNED"

Y-H-I-! MERCY... HAVE MERCY!

"SOON HIS PROUD EMPIRE CRUMBLED...HIS COURT BECAME A PROWLING PLACE FOR JUNGLE BEASTS...

"HE WAS BURIED HERE WITH THE TREASURE...A MARKER WAS PLACED AS A WARNING TO ALL THE GREEDY..."

"HE DIED ALONE WITH THE JEWELS..UNATTENDED, UNMOURNED...

THE VOICE FADED THEN...HAD IT BEEN ONLY THE WIND?

„OR HAD IT BEEN A VOICE FROM THE KILLER'S MEMORY AS HE HALTED TO GLANCE AT A MARKER OF WEATHERED STONE?

HUH...SO THAT'S THE WARNING, IS IT? WHY CAN'T I FORGET THAT FOOL GUIDE'S BABBLING?

THE PICK SWINGS FASTER NOW...FASTER! AND AT LAST...

I'VE MADE IT...BROKEN THROUGH! NOW FOR A LIGHT!

THEN, WITH A TORCH, HE RACES THROUGH A MUSTY PASSAGE..PAST A POOL...

SOMETHING UP AHEAD THERE... THE TOMB OF THE MAHARAJAH!

A CRUMBLING COFFIN OF STONE. HE PAUSES BESIDE IT, AND CANNOT SUPPRESS A SHUDDER...

SOMETHING STRANGE ABOUT THE REMAINS..

BUT THEN HIS EAGER EYES DISCOVER THEM...**THE JEWELS.**

THE WEALTH OF A HUNDRED KINGS.

WINE AND WOMEN...EASY STREET! I'VE WON...I'VE LICKED THAT STUPID CURSE!

AND DEPARTING WITH HIS PRECIOUS BURDEN, HE SEES HIS IMAGE IN THE STILL POOL. THE ROAR OF AN ANGUISHED BEAST ESCAPES HIS THROAT...

NO! NO!

AAAA